130

1840

Roxbury, Feb. 11, 1879.

My dear Wendell:

Your letter is just received. I will lose no time before answering such of your interrogations as I can to-day.

(1) The World's Anti-Slavery Convention was brought together by a Circular issued by the British and Foreign A. S. Society, and proposing that it should commence its sessions on the 12th of June, 1840. I quote a passage or two from the Circular: "To the friends and protectors of the oppressed, the Society offers the right hand of fellowship, and earnestly solicits their co-operation. . . It strongly urges upon the friends of the slave of every nation, wherever it may be practicable, to associate themselves, and unitedly, as well as individually, to labor for the extinction of slavery, . . . and it earnestly invites them to this Confe-

rence." You will observe how explicit and inclusive were the appeal and the invitation. Among the delegates sent from this side of the Atlantic, as you know, were Lucretia Mott, Sarah Pugh, Mary Grew, Elizabeth Neall (Gray) — &c. The discussion on their right to seats in the Convention was induced by the following motion made by Wendell Phillips: — "That a Committee of five be appointed to prepare a correct list of the members of this Convention, with instructions to include in such list all persons bearing credentials from any Anti-Slavery body." Those who supported the motion, by earnest speech, were Mr. Phillips, Prof. Adam (then of Cambridge Mass.), Dr. (afterward Sir John) Bowring, George Bradburn, George Thompson, William H. Ashurst, (an eminent London Solicitor,) James Cannings Fuller, and Colonel Jonathan P. Miller (of Greek celebrity) of Vermont.

Those who as earnestly opposed the admission of the women delegates were George Stacey (an influential Quaker), Rev. John Burnet, Rev. Henry Grew, Rev. Nathaniel Colver, Dr. Rolph (from Upper Canada), William Allen (a venerable Quaker), William Cairns (of Edinburgh), Rev. A. Harvey (of Glasgow), Rev. John Angell James (of Birmingham), Captain Wauchope, R. N., James G. Birney, S. J. Prescod (colored) of Barbadoes, Rev. C. Stowe, and Rev. Dr. Morrison (the noted Chinese missionary).

George Stacey (of the British and Foreign A. S. Committee) proposed the following as an amendment to Mr. Phillips's motion:—"That this Convention, upon a question arising as to the admission of females appointed as delegates from America to take their seats in this body, resolve to decide this question in the negative." It was "put and carried by an overwhelming majority."

Ms.A.61 v.9, p.68B

The most surprising thing about this unjust and most narrow-minded decision was the manner in which it was received by Mr. Thompson, Mr. Phillips, and Prof. Adam. [I had not then arrived in London.] Mr. Thompson said—"I hope that as the question is now decided, it will never be again brought forward; and I trust that Mr. Phillips will give us the assurance that we shall proceed with one heart and one mind." To this Mr. Phillips responded—"I have no doubt of it. There is no unpleasant feeling in our minds (!). I have no doubt that the women will sit with as much interest behind the bar as though the original proposition had been carried in the affirmative (!). All we asked was an expression of opinion, and having obtained it we shall now act with the utmost cordiality." Prof. Adam said—"I shall co-operate with the gentlemen now around me with the same zeal and earnestness as I should have done if this question had never been started (!)."